

CITY COUNCIL MEETING
JULY 6, 1988

ACCESS OF NON-POWERED
BOATS TO THE MOKELUMNE
RIVER

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CC-40

City Clerk Reimche presented the following letter which had been received from Patrick Coulston, 1431 Lake Street, Lodi, regarding access of non-power boats to the Mokelumne River from Lodi Lake:

"To the members of the Lodi City Council:

Recently, a new set of regulations have been adopted by the City relating to boat access to the Mokelumne River from Lodi Lake and Park. These regulations have had the unfortunate, unwarranted, and I hope unintended effect of preventing the legal use of the Mokelumne River as it flows through Lodi for such wholesome and innocuous activities as canoeing, rowing, and flat-water kayaking, except by those few fortunate citizens able to own property adjacent to the river. The primary purpose of this letter is to request that you include in the agenda of the next City Council meeting (July 7, 1988), time to consider a revision of the implementation of these new regulations. In addition, I would like to use this letter as an opportunity to provide for your consideration, prior to the upcoming City Council meeting, my views on the existing regulatory situation and how it came about.

"You may not launch your canoe into the River from the Park or launch in the Lake and paddle into the river, because if you are run over by a powerboat the city may be held liable". These words (approximately), recently spoken to me by a well meaning and competent member of the City's Parks and Recreation staff, still ring irritatingly in ears. This is apparently the "bottom line" regarding the City's policy of not allowing non-power craft access to river from Lodi Lake Park, a conclusion I arrived at after several lengthy phone calls to various members of the City's Parks and Recreation staff. What twisting path has led to this ironic policy? Please read on for my interpretation.

Sometime last year the city commissioned a study by a park design consultant to provide a plan for the future of Lodi Lake Park. Among his many recommendations were that the City do what it can to prevent the use of power boats on the Mokelumne River adjacent to the Park because: 1) it was causing severe bank erosion, contributing to loss of soil; and trees along the banks. 2) high speed power boating (joy riding or water skiing) is fundamentally dangerous because of the narrowness of the river and the presence of snags and shoals, and 3) power boating (at least by large and powerful boats) is inconsistent with the desired future plans for the wilderness area, which is to emphasize its wildlife habitat and nature study potential.